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EXAMINER	
HARRIS, ANTON B	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2831	4

DATE MAILED: 10/31/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Paton
Tzeng et al
advertisement

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/989,289	MORROW ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Anton B Harris	2831	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____ .

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-34* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) *15-29,31 and 32* is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-3,5,6,10-14,30,33 and 34* is/are rejected.

7)☒ Claim(s) *4 and 7-9* is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11)☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a)☐ approved b)☐ disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2 .
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: .

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

   I. Claims 1-14, 30, 33, and 34 are drawn to a toneable conduit, classified in class 174, subclass 48.

   II. Claims 15-29, 31, and 32 are drawn to a method of making a toneable conduit, classified in class 156, subclass 47.

2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because:

Inventions II and I are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make other and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case, the product claimed in Group I can be made by another and materially different process than that claimed in Group II, such as a process which does not include the step of extruding a polymer melt around the advancing wire.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

3. During a telephone conversation with Andrew T. Muenier on October 16, 2002 a provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-14, 30, 33, and 34. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this

Office action. Claims 15-29, 31, and 32 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

4. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

6. Claims 1 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherlock (U.S. Patent No. 3,367,370 cited by Applicant) in view of Nakamura et al. (JP 05106779A cited by Applicant).

Regarding claim 1, Sherlock (col. 2, lines 41-46) discloses toneable conduit, comprising: an elongate polymeric tube 10 having, a wall with an interior surface, an exterior surface, and a predetermined wall thickness; a channel (figure 3 between reference #'s 18) extending longitudinally of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube 10, a continuous said high elongation wire 20 coincident with the channel (figure 3 between reference #'s 18) in the elongate polymeric tube 10, said wire coated 20 with a coating 24, composition that prevents the wire from adhering to the polymer melt used to form the polymeric tube 10, but lacks a channel within the wall of the polymeric tube, a stabilizing rib extending longitudinally along the interior surface of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube and located radially inward from said channel, and a continuous said high elongation wire capable of transmitting a toning signal to allow the conduit to be detected by toning equipment and capable of being torn out of the polymeric tube to allow the conduit and wire to be coupled.

Nakamura et al. (figure 1) shows a channel within the wall of the polymeric tube1 and a stabilizing rib extending longitudinally along the interior surface of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube 1 and located radially inward from said channel.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a channel within the wall of the polymeric tube and a stabilizing rib extending longitudinally along the interior surface of

the wall of the elongate polymeric tube and located radially inward from said channel in order to hold a buried pipe and provide strength to the conduit in view of the teachings of Nakamura et al.

Furthermore, claim 1 recites that the high elongation wire is capable of transmitting a toning signal to allow the conduit to be detected by toning equipment and capable of being torn out of the polymeric tube to allow the conduit and wire to be coupled. It has been held that the recitation that an element is "capable of" performing a function is not a positive limitation but only requires the ability to so perform. It does not constitute a limitation in any patentable sense. *In re Hutchinson,* 69 USPQ 138.

Regarding claim 13, Nakamura et al. (figure 1) shows at least one additional rib extending longitudinally along the interior surface of the elongate polymeric tube 1.

7. Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherlock as modified by Nakamura et al. as applied to claim 1 above and further in view of the advertisement by Pyramid Industries, Inc regarding the Toneable Duct product (Publication date unkown but prior to August 7, 2001 cited by Applicant).

Regarding claims 2 and 3, Sherlock modified as taught by Nakamura et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed, but lacks an elongation of at least about 1% claim 2, and an elongation of at least about 3% claim 3.

The advertisement by Pyramid Industries, Inc regarding the Toneable Duct product teaches an elongation of at least 1% and 3%. (see table of conductor data).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing an elongation of at least about 1% and an elongation of at least about 3% in order to withstand environmental conditions

in view of the teachings of The advertisement by Pyramid Industries, Inc regarding the Toneable Duct product.

8. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherlock as modified by Nakamura et al. and the advertisement by Pyramid Industries, Inc regarding the Toneable Duct product as applied to claim 2 above and further in view of Craton (U. S. Patent No. 6,139,957).

Regarding claim 5, Sherlock modified by Nakamura et al. and the advertisement by Pyramid Industries, Inc regarding the Toneable Duct product discloses the invention substantially as claimed, but lacks a copper-clad steel wire.

Craton (col. 4, line 11) teaches a copper-clad steel wire 12 or 15.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a copper-clad steel wire in order to be used as a metallic conductor in view of the teachings of Craton.

9. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherlock as modified by Nakamura et al. and the advertisement by Pyramid Industries, Inc regarding the Toneable Duct product as applied to claim 2 above and further in view of Muschiatti (U. S. Patent No. 5,227,103).

10. Regarding claim 6, Muschiatti (col. 3., line 18-19) teaches a high elongation wire with a diameter of from about 0.32 mm to about 2.59 mm.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a wire with a diameter of

from about 0.32 mm to about 2.59 mm in order to make insulated wires having smaller outer median diameters in view of the teachings of Muschiatti.

Furthermore, the wire of Sherlock inherently has size. It would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a wire with a diameter of from about 0.32 mm to about 2.59 mm, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the size of a component. A change in size is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Rose,* 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955).

11. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherlock as modified by Nakamura et al. as applied to claim 1 above and further in view of Levingston et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,105,649).

Regarding claim 10, Sherlock modified as taught by Nakamura et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed, but lacks a smooth exterior surface of the tube.

Levingston et al. (col. 5, lines 50-54) teaches a smooth exterior surface of the tube 16.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a smooth exterior surface of the tube in order to enhance strength and external appearance in view of the teachings of Levingston et al.

12. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherlock as modified by Nakamura et al. as applied to claim 1 above and further in view of Karl (U.S. Patent No. 6,135,159).

Regarding claim 11, Sherlock modified as taught by Nakamura et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed, but lacks a tube formed of a polymeric material selected from the group consisting of polyethylene and polyvinyl chloride.

Karl (col. 1, line 55) teaches a tube 12 formed of a polymeric material selected from the group consisting of polyethylene and polyvinyl chloride.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a tube formed of a polymeric material selected from the group consisting of polyethylene and polyvinyl chloride in order to offer resistance to chemical attack in view of the teachings of Karl.

13. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherlock as modified by Nakamura et al. and Karl as applied to claim 11 above and further in view of Bird (U.S. Patent No. 6,131,265).

Regarding claim 12, Sherlock modified as taught by Nakamura et al. and Karl discloses the invention substantially as claimed, but lacks a tube formed of a high-density polyethylene.

Bird (col. 4, line 42) teaches a tube 12 formed of a high-density polyethylene.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a tube formed of a high density polyethylene in order to have the advantage of a flexible plastic material in view of the teachings of Bird.

14. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sherlock in view of Nakamura et al., Bird, Craton, and Tzeng et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,005,191).

Regarding claim 1, Sherlock (col. 2, lines 41-46) discloses toneable conduit, comprising: an elongate polymeric tube 10 having, a wall with an interior surface, an exterior surface, and a predetermined wall thickness; a channel (figure 3 between reference #'s 18) extending longitudinally of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube 10, a continuous said high elongation wire 20 coincident with the channel (figure 3 between reference #'s 18) in the elongate polymeric tube 10, said wire coated 20 with a coating 24, composition that prevents the wire from adhering to the polymer melt used to form the polymeric tube 10, but lacks a channel within the wall of the polymeric tube, a stabilizing rib extending longitudinally along the interior surface of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube and located radially inward from said channel, a predetermined wall thickness, a tube formed of high density polyethylene, a copper-clad steel wire coated with polytetrafluoroethylene, and a copper-clad steel wire capable of transmitting a toning signal to allow the conduit to be detected by toning equipment and capable of being torn out of the polymeric tube to allow the conduit and wire to be coupled.

Nakamura et al. (figure 1) shows a channel within the wall of the polymeric tube1 and a stabilizing rib extending longitudinally along the interior surface of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube 1 and located radially inward from said channel.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a channel within the wall of the polymeric tube and a stabilizing rib extending longitudinally along the interior surface of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube and located radially inward from said channel in order to hold a buried pipe and provide strength to the conduit in view of the teachings of Nakamura et al.

Bird (col. 4, lines 34-37) teaches a predetermined thickness of a wall 14.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a predetermined thickness of a wall in order to have the advantage of having the depth of recess equal to about one-fifth to about one-half the wall thickness in view of the teachings of Bird.

Bird (col. 4, line 42) teaches a tube 12 formed of a high-density polyethylene.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a tube formed of a high density polyethylene in order to have the advantage of a flexible plastic material in view of the teachings of Bird.

Craton (col. 4, line 11) teaches a copper-clad steel wire 12 or 15.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a copper-clad steel wire in order to be used as a metallic conductor in view of the teachings of Craton.

Tzeng et al. (col. 4, line 11) teaches a wire 14 coated with polytetrafluoroethylene.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a wire coated with polytetrafluoroethylene in order to be residually stressed into an expanded shape in view of the teachings of Tzeng et al.

Furthermore, claim 14 recites that the copper-clad steel wire is capable of transmitting a toning signal to allow the conduit to be detected by toning equipment and capable of being torn out of the polymeric tube to allow the conduit and wire to be coupled. It has been held that the recitation that an element is "capable of" performing a function is not a positive limitation but

only requires the ability to so perform. It does not constitute a limitation in any patentable sense. *In re Hutchinson,* 69 USPQ 138.

15. Claim 30 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wood et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,109,941) in view of Sherlock, Nakamura et al., and Pelzer (U.S. Patent No. 5,212,349 cited by Applicant).

Regarding claim 30, Wood et al. (abstract) discloses a method of coupling a first toneable conduit 1 with a second toneable conduit 3, comprising the steps of: providing a first toneable conduit 1 comprising an elongate polymeric tube having a wall with an interior surface, an exterior surface, and a predetermined wall thickness, and mechanically connecting the first conduit and the second conduit, but lacks a channel extending longitudinally within the wall of the elongate polymeric tube; and a stabilizing rib extending longitudinally along the interior surface of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube and located radially inward from said channel; and a continuous, high elongation wire coincident with the channel in the elongate polymeric tube, said wire coated with a coating composition that prevents the wire from adhering to the polymer melt used to form the polymeric tube; providing a second toneable conduit comprising an elongate polymeric tube having a wall with an interior surface, an exterior surface, and a predetermined wall thickness; a channel extending longitudinally within the wall of the elongate polymeric tube; and a stabilizing rib extending longitudinally along the interior surface of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube and located radially inward from said channel; and a continuous, high elongation wire coincident with the channel in the elongate polymeric tube, said wire coated with a coating composition that prevents the wire from adhering to the polymer melt used to form the polymeric tube, tearing the high elongation wire of the first toneable conduit

through the exterior surface of the first toneable conduit, tearing the high elongation wire of the second toneable conduit through the exterior surface of the second toneable conduit; and electrically connecting the high elongation wire from the first. toneable conduit and the high elongation wire from the second toneable conduit.

Regarding claim 30, Sherlock (col. 2, lines 41-46) teaches a channel (figure 3 between reference #'s 18) extending longitudinally of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube 10, a continuous said high elongation wire 20 coincident with the channel (figure 3 between reference #'s 18) in the elongate polymeric tube 10, said wire coated 20 with a coating 24, composition that prevents the wire from adhering to the polymer melt used to form the polymeric tube 10.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the method of Wood et al. by providing a channel extending longitudinally of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube, a continuous said high elongation wire coincident with the channel in the elongate polymeric tube, said wire coated with a coating, composition that prevents the wire from adhering to the polymer melt used to form the polymeric tube in order to print as desired in view of the teachings of Sherlock.

Nakamura et al. (figure 1) shows a channel within the wall of the polymeric tube1 and a stabilizing rib extending longitudinally along the interior surface of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube 1 and located radially inward from said channel.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the method of Wood et al. by providing a channel within the wall of the polymeric tube and a stabilizing rib extending longitudinally along the interior surface of

the wall of the elongate polymeric tube and located radially inward from said channel in order to hold a buried pipe and provide strength to the conduit in view of the teachings of Nakamura et al.

Furthermore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the method of Wood et al. by providing a second toneable conduit comprising an elongate polymeric tube having a wall with an interior surface, an exterior surface, and a predetermined wall thickness; a channel extending longitudinally within the wall of the elongate polymeric tube; and a stabilizing rib extending longitudinally along the interior surface of the wall of the elongate polymeric tube and located radially inward from said channel; and a continuous, high elongation wire coincident with the channel in the elongate polymeric tube, said wire coated with a coating composition that prevents the wire from adhering, to the polymer melt used to form the polymeric tube, since it has been held that mere duplication of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art. *St. Regis Paper Co. v. Bemis Co.,* 193 USPQ 8.

Pelzer (col. 12, lines 3-20) teaches tearing the high elongation wire 14 of the first toneable conduit 12 through the exterior surface of the first toneable conduit 12, tearing the high elongation wire 14 of the second toneable conduit 12 through the exterior surface of the second toneable 12 conduit, and electrically connecting the high elongation wire 14 from the first. toneable conduit 12 and the high elongation wire 14 from the second toneable conduit 12 (col. 12, lines 24-27).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the method of Wood et al. by including the step of a tearing the high elongation wire of the first toneable conduit through the exterior surface of the first toneable

conduit, tearing the high elongation wire of the second toneable conduit through the exterior surface of the second toneable conduit, and electrically connecting the high elongation wire from the first. toneable conduit and the high elongation wire from the second toneable conduit in order to make a permanent electrical contact in view of the teachings of Pelzer.

16. Claim 33 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wood et al. as modified by Sherlock, Nakamura et al., and Pelzer above in claim 30 and further in view of Tzeng et al.

Regarding claim 33, Wood et al. modified as taught by Sherlock, Nakamura et al., and Pelzer discloses the invention substantially as claimed, but lacks a coating of polytetrafluoroethylene.

Tzeng et al. (col. 4, line 11) teaches a wire 14 coated with polytetrafluoroethylene.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a wire coated with polytetrafluoroethylene in order to be residually stressed into an expanded shape in view of the teachings of Tzeng et al.

Furthermore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the method of Wood et al. by providing a second toneable conduit with a wire coated with polytetrafluoroethylene, since it has been held that mere duplication of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art. *St. Regis Paper Co. v. Bemis Co.,* 193 USPQ 8.

17. Claim 34 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wood et al. as modified by Sherlock, Nakamura et al., and Pelzer above in claim 30 and further in view of Bird.

Regarding claim 34, Wood et al. modified as taught by Sherlock, Nakamura et al., and Pelzer discloses the invention substantially as claimed, but lacks a high-density polyethylene.

Bird (col. 4, line 42) teaches a tube 12 formed of a high-density polyethylene.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Sherlock by providing a tube formed of a high density polyethylene in order to have the advantage of a flexible plastic material in view of the teachings of Bird.

Furthermore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the method of Wood et al. by providing a second toneable conduit with a tube formed of a high-density polyethylene, since it has been held that mere duplication of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art. *St. Regis Paper Co. v. Bemis Co.,* 193 USPQ 8.

Allowable Subject Matter

18. Claims 4, and 7-9 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Claim 4 recites the limitation of selecting the high elongation wire from a group consisting of copper-clad steel wire, copper-clad aluminum wire, copper wire, and tin copper wire and is neither disclosed nor taught by the prior art of record, alone or in combination.

Claims 7-9 recite the limitation of the coating composition being formed of a polymeric material selected from the group consisting of fluoropolymers, polyamides, polyesters, polycarbonates, polypropylene, polyurethanes, polyacetals, polyacrytics, epoxies and silicone polymers and is neither disclosed nor taught by the prior art of record, alone or in combination.

Conclusion

19. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Blanquet et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,068,426 discloses a method of connecting buried conduits.

Burress et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,139,068 discloses a method of maintaining connection between two conduits.

Kawai et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,812,358 discloses a pipe with conductive plastic resins.

20. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Anton B Harris whose telephone number is (703) 305-4764. The examiner can normally be reached on weekdays from 8:30am to 5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Dean Reichard, can be reached on (703) 308-3682. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 305-1341.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

abh

10/24/02

ANTHONY DINKINS
PRIMARY EXAMINER